What is claimed is:

1. An isolated peptide comprising the amino acid sequence selected from the general structural formula Ia, Ib, Ic and Id:

Cap-AA8-AA7-AA6-AA5-AA4*-AA3-AA2-AA1*	8-mer	Ia
Cap-AA7-AA6-AA5-AA4*-AA3-AA2-AA1*	7-mer	Ib
Cap-AA6-AA5-AA4*-AA3-AA2-AA1*	6-mer	Ic
Cap-AA5-AA4*-AA3-AA2-AA1*	5-mer	Id

wherein

AA1 is selected from:

(a) Gly,

(b) Ala,

(c) Leu, and

(d) a small aliphatic amino acid;

AA2 is selected from:

(a) Phe,

(b) Tha,

(c) Cha,

(d) Tyr,

(e) Pya,

(f) Trp, and

(g) another aromatic amino acid;

AA3 is selected from:

(a) Leu,

(b) Cpa, and

(c) a natural or unnatural aliphatic amino acid;

AA4 is selected from:

(a) Lys,

(b) Lys substituted by C_1–C_{17} alkyl, C_5–C_{20} arylalkyl or a C_6–C_{20} aryl radical,

(c) Orn optionally substituted by C_1–C_{17} alkyl, C_5–C_{20} arylalkyl or a C_6–C_{20} aryl radical, and

(d) hLys optionally substituted by C_1–C_{17} alkyl, C_5–C_{20} arylalkyl or a C_6–C_{20} aryl radical;

AA5 is selected from:

(a) Arg,

(b) Lys,

(c) Orn,

(d) hLys, and

(e) His;

AA6 is selected from:

(a) Lys,

(b) hLys,

(c) Orn,

(d) Lys wherein N^{ε} is substituted by one or two radicals selected from C_5–C_{20} alkyl, a linear or branched C_1–C_6 acyl group, cyclized saturated or unsaturated C_5–C_{20} alkyl, C_5–C_{20} arylalkyl and a C_6–C_{20} aryl radical, and

(e) Orn wherein N^{δ} is substituted by one or two radicals selected from C_5–C_{20} alkyl, a linear or branched C_1–C_6 acyl group, cyclized saturated or unsaturated C_5–C_{20} alkyl, C_5–C_{20} arylalkyl and a C_6–C_{20} aryl radical;

AA7 is selected from:

(a) Ala,

(b) Val, and

(c) a natural or unnatural amino acid, or mimetics or isostere thereof;

AA8 is selected from:

(a) Pro,

(b) a natural or unnatural amino acid, or mimetics or isostere thereof; and

the Cap is either not present or selected from:

(a) C_1–C_8 acyl, and

(b) C_3–C_8 cycloalkylalkanoyl or furanylacetyl;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

such a peptide being optionally linked to nuclear localization peptide sequences HIV-1 Tat or *Antennapedia* peptide sequence (penetratin);
and the (*) symbol indicates a site for optional intramolecular linkage via an amide, substituted amide bond or isostere thereof; the resulting compounds being the respective cyclic 5-mers, 6-mers, 7-mers, or 8-mers.

2. An isolated peptide according to claim 1, wherein

AA1 is selected from:

(a) Gly,

(b) Ala, and

(c) Leu;

AA2 is selected from:

(a) Phe,

(b) Tha,

(c) Cha,

(d) Tyr,

(e) Pya, and

(f) Trp;

AA3 is selected from:

(a) Leu,

(b) Cpa, and

(c) a natural aliphatic amino acid;

AA4 is selected from:

(a) Lys,

(b) Orn, and

(c) hLys;

AA5 is selected from:

(a) Arg,

(b) Lys,

(c) Orn,

(d) hLys, and

(e) His;

AA6 is selected from:

(a) Lys,

(b) hLys,

(c) Orn;

AA7 is selected from:

(a) Ala,

(b) Val, and

(c) a natural amino acid;

AA8 is selected from:

(a) Pro,

(b) a natural amino acid; and

the Cap is either not present or selected from:

(a) acetyl (Ac), cyclopropylcarbonyl, cyclopropylacetyl (Cpr), pivaloyl, isopropylcarbonyl, isopropylacetyl, 2,2-dimethylbutanoyl (Dmb), levulinoyl, cyclopropylglycinoyl (Cpg), dimethylglycinoyl (Dmg), and

(b) cyclopentylacetyl, cyclohexylacetyl, cycloheptylacetyl, furanylacetyl;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

such a peptide being optionally linked to nuclear localization peptide sequences HIV-1 Tat or *Antennapedia* peptide sequence (penetratin);
and the (*) symbol indicates a site for optional intramolecular linkage via an amide bond;
the resulting compounds being the respective cyclic 5-mers, 6-mers, 7-mers, or 8-mers.

3. An isolated peptide according to claim 1 comprising:
the cyclic 5-mer:

Ac-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly), or
Ac-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly);

the cyclic 6-mer:

Ac-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Ac-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Lys-(C_5-C_{20})-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Lys-(C_5-C_{20})-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Lys-(CH(CH_3)($C_{13}H_{27}$))-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Dmb- Lys-(C_5-C_{20})-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly), or
Dmb- Lys-(C_5-C_{20})-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly);

the cyclic 7-mer:

Ac-Ala-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Ac-Ala-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),
Cpr-Ala-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly), or
Cpr-Ala-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly);

or

the cyclic 8-mer:

Pro-Ala-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),

Ac-Pro-Ala-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),

Ac-Pro-Ala-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly),

Cpr-Pro-Ala-Lys-Arg-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly), or

Cpr-Pro-Ala-Lys-Lys-(Lys-Leu-Phe-Gly);

wherein parentheses indicate the residues involved in cyclization;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts of such peptides.

4. A peptide according to claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for use in a method for the therapeutic treatment of a mammal.

5. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a peptide according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

6. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of cancer in a mammal comprising, in a therapeutically effective amount, a peptide according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

7. The use of a peptide according to claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the preparation of a pharmaceutical composition for use in the treatment of cancer.

8. The use of a peptide according to claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof in the treatment of cancer.

9. A method for treating cancer comprising administering to a mammal in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a peptide according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

10. A method of inhibiting the binding of the E2F-1 cell regulatory protein to Cyclin A comprising administering to a mammal in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a peptide according to claim 1, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.